

Carey and Hattie Kingdon House
300 Reading Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Research and Photography by
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Summary:

The Carey and Hattie Kingdon House is a square, frame, 2-1/2 story house with a cross-gabled roof that features prominent shingled gables on three sides, a full width front porch, a two-story rear kitchen wing and an enclosed porch addition on the rear. It is somewhat altered by the extension of a bay window, but retains its essential character. The house sits on three lots (11,12,and 13, Block 3) at the corner of Reading and Grandin Avenues in the Rockville Park subdivision of Rockville. (See attached map.) Rockville Park is located on the east side of the CSX and Metro tracks near the Rockville stations and boasts many historic resources. This area appears on the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County, Md., as District 26-13 and was initially considered for the National Register designation that eventually was limited to the immediate area of the Rockville B & O Station. Several houses neighboring 300 Reading Avenue (i.e., numbers 206 and 212) are in the Rockville Historic Buildings Catalog. It is the subject of a Rockville Historic Buildings and Districts Survey Form. Some research was done on the house when it was included in Peerless Rockville's Progressive Dinner (1990 and again in 1997). Anne Cissel and Judy Christensen completed a MHT form on 206 Reading Avenue, owned by the parents and later the sisters of Carey Kingdon, in 1986 for Peerless Rockville.

Environmental Setting

The frame 2-1/2 story rectangular house sits on the middle of the three lots numbered 11, 12, and 13 at the corner of Reading and Grandin Avenues, two-lane suburban streets with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks and parallel parking on each side. There is a small triangular park at this intersection.



One block west on Reading is its intersection with Stonestreet Avenue, with its modern brick structures (pictured left), and CSX and Metro tracks beyond with a backdrop of high rise offices in the center of Rockville.

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth century two-story wood frame vernacular houses, interspersed with later one-story Cape Cods and cottages, characterize the area. (See photo, next page)

Environmental Setting:



Top Photograph, Grandin Avenue
looking north with 300 Reading
Avenue on right;

Middle row, left 206 Reading Avenue

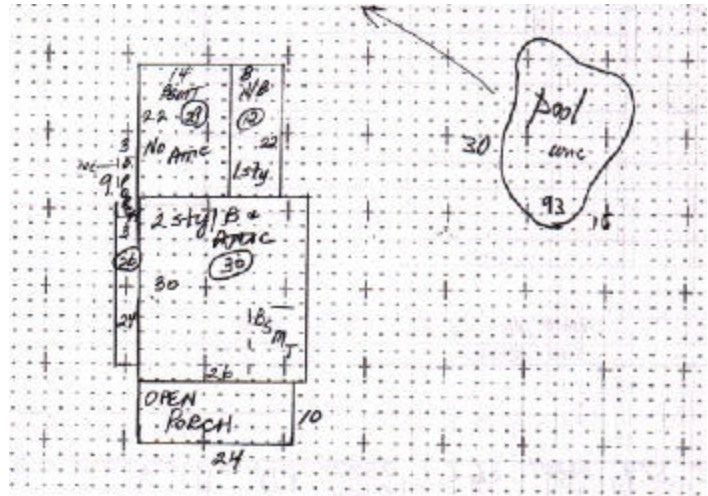
Middle right, 700 Grandin Avenue
across from 300 Reading

Bottom left, 212 Reading Avenue.



Architectural and Design significance.

The house consists of a 26-foot wide, 30-foot deep two-story main block with basement and attic. (See 1988 tax assessor's worksheet plan, right) Across the front of this main block is an open one-story porch supported by three Doric Style columns. (Pictured below.) On the rear are a two-story and a one-story addition. It appears that parts of the one-story shed porch addition have been incorporated into the first story room of the two-story addition (kitchen) leaving a "tunnel" to the kitchen door from the east side. On the left flank of the main block is a 3-foot wide two-story addition with steep shed roof containing the main stairway. Additional investigation would be required to determine if it is original to the house. The back of this addition abuts the open rear kitchen porch with shed roof.



The main red brick chimney emerges from the main block near the gable peak. Another red brick chimney is on the back wall of the two-story rear addition. The foundation where visible is brick. The siding is overlapping clapboards. The roofs of the front and west rear porches are clad with old red embossed tin shingles. The rest of the roofs are black asphalt/composition shingle. The one-over-one double-hung sash and their exterior shutters appear to be original. Some of the smaller windows may not be original and do not have shutters. The exterior doors appear to be original.



The most distinctive features of the house are its gables. The roof of the main block is cross gable with an equally large front gable and a smaller rear gable. Each cross gable end has a pair of attic windows (not original) with jalousie glazing. The gable ends are sided with butt end shingles. The gable ends are open, but sit on prominent stringers just above the second story window casings. The front gable has at its base a broad projecting cove cornice, made of smooth horizontal boards, which sits atop the three second story windows. The pediment above is closed and encompasses a single horizontal attic window with jalousies and rounded shingle siding. This unusual cornice gives the illusion of added height to the front elevation. At the lower corners of the gable valleys are plain brackets.



The house has been painted with a light blue body color, salmon pink for the gable ends and doors, cream for the trim, and dark green for shutters, highlights, and foundations. (At the time the Rockville Historic Buildings and Districts Survey Form was filled out and photos taken in the mid-1970s, there were no shutters on the house.)



The interior has been remodeled, but it retains its old window and door casings, including bull's eye corner medallions, transoms, beaded board enclosure of rear staircase and panels under front stair, and front staircase railing and balusters.



History and Significance.

From 1911 to 1977, 300 Reading Avenue was associated with the Kingdon family, who was active in Rockville civic affairs and built two fine homes in the late nineteenth century on Reading Avenue in the newly developed Rockville Park. This home is an attractive example of the local building style in an intact neighborhood. This house reflects the development of Rockville that occurred in the last quarter of the nineteenth century near the new B & O rail station.

History and Support

Reading Avenue is named after William Reading, “a successful timber merchant, inventor, and owner of two 500-acre farms overlooking the C and O. Canal,”¹ who purchased 28-5/8 acres along the east side of the B & O’s Metropolitan Branch tracks from Edward and Martha Stonestreet in 1884,² He subdivided this as “Reading’s 1st Addition to Rockville,”³ (plat attached) with streets named after family members.⁴ He subdivided the blocks into approximately one-third acre lots.⁵

When the plat was recorded in March 1888, there were no houses on Block 3, where 300 Reading Avenue now sits. There were three houses on Block 2, including 212 Reading Avenue, which sits across Grandin Avenue from #300. Reading’s lot at the corner of Grandin and Reading, where #300 now sits, was lot 18, Block 3, measuring 102 feet across the front and 168.5 feet deep, totaling 17,187 square feet. In 1890, the Readings transferred all the unsold lots to Washington Danenhower for \$10,000. The land was described as part of Haymond’s Addition, Burgundy, and Song Discovered tracts.⁶ Danenhower resubdivided the blocks, added sidewalks on Grandin and Reading, and filed his subdivision as Rockville Park.⁷ Lots nos. 11, 12, and 13 of Block 3, which would become #300 Reading Avenue, were each approximately 27 x 168 feet and totaled 13,374 square feet.

According to the Tax Assessor’s worksheet, the lot size is now 12,750 square feet, perhaps reflecting some street widening on Grandin Avenue. By 1896, Danenhower had sold all but six of his Rockville Park lots. Most homes were described in tax records as being two-story frame with five rooms. Rockville Park was valued for tax purposes at \$300 an acre.⁸

In 1893, Mary Lyons and Hobart Hutton paid \$2400 for lots 11, 12, and 13 of block 3 of Rockville Park, with improvements, to wit, the house at 300 Reading Avenue.⁹ The research done by Peerless Rockville indicated that the Huttons built the house; perhaps they entered into a contract to buy the house and land from the developer Danenhower, with the deed being made when the sale was concluded. It is significant that the deed lists Mary Lyons Hutton’s name first, perhaps because she

¹ MHT form for 206 Reading Avenue, hereinafter “Cissel MHT.”

² Montgomery County Land Record L/F EBP 32/225, (4/3/1884).

³ L/F JA 13/124.

⁴ Cissel MHT.

⁵ Cissel MHT.

⁶ L/F JA 17/268, (3/26/1890).

⁷ Montgomery County Plat A-53, L/F 17/268; see also A-47.

⁸ Peerless Rockville “Rockville Park” file.

⁹ L/f JA 36/451, (2/27/1893).

300 Reading Avenue

paid for the property with her own money. By 1898, Mary Lyons Hutton was widowed and transferred the house to the mortgage holder¹⁰

In 1911, Hattie C. and Carey Kingdon bought 300 Reading, less than a block away from his parents and sisters at #206, and assumed a \$2000 loan against the house.¹¹ According to the Cissel/Christensen MHT form for 206 Reading Avenue (survey no. M:26/13/3, known as the Kingdon Sisters House), Carey Kingdon was son of John and Alverda (nee Appler of Baltimore,

died 1928 at age 83) Kingdon and the brother of the three Kingdon sisters, Isabel, Mary, and Alverda. According to the research conducted by Peerless Rockville for their Progressive Dinner program, Carey Kingdon was a reporter for the Evening Star, was its Rockville correspondent, commuted to Washington on the Metropolitan Branch train, and was Justice of the Peace in 1912. In 1902, he married Hattie Clagett, daughter of Rebecca A. Clagett. Hattie Kingdon established the first school museum in the County's school system. Housed initially at Rockville Academy, it was moved to an upper hall at Rockville Elementary School, but was dismantled and the exhibits since lost when that became a junior high.

In 1946, Carey and Hattie C. Kingdon transferred the house to his sister Mary R. Kingdon.¹² Carey's sister Alverda was living at #300 at the time of her death in 1959 at age 74.¹³ Mary Kingdon died in 1971, leaving the property to John Donald Kingdon and Joanne Kingdon Welsh.¹⁴ It was sold out of the Kingdon family in 1977 to Anita L. Miller,¹⁵ and has turned over six times since then.¹⁶ The current owners are Carl and Lisa Bretscher, who live in the house with their two small children.

¹⁰ L/F TD 6/289, (11/7/1898).

¹¹ L/F 224/267, (11/10/1911).

¹² L/F 1003/286, (3/9/46).

¹³ Peerless Rockville "Rockville Park" file.

¹⁴ L/F 4198/718, (3/9/1972); estate No. 042 0671.

¹⁵ L/F 4372/768, (4/30/73).

¹⁶ To James and Anita (Miller) Rountree, L/F 5044/23, (11/2/77); to Richard R. and Linda D. Dimock, L/F 5693/468, (4/30/1981) (\$122K); to David B. and Linda D. Hoffsis, L/F 7648/409, (4/16/87) (\$168K); to Kevin J. Kuehn, L/F 9085/264, (11/10/89) (\$217K); to William R. Sherman and Elizabeth A. Jorgenson, L/F 10998/675, (12/30/92) (\$265K); and to Lisa and Carl Bretscher, L/F 18247/210, (6/26/2000) (\$317K).